

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

TRANSPORTATION 2035

GENERAL FOCUS GROUP: PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED FROM RANDOM PHONE POLL

MAY 19, 2008

MARIN COUNTY: SAN RAFAEL

Planning for future transportation needs: Although the participants agreed that public transportation in Marin County is well maintained, they also reported that the condition of the roads and highways ranges from fair to poor. The participants all agreed that maintenance of existing systems is essential in planning for the future. However, a majority of participants felt that prioritizing maintenance over the development of new systems would continue the transportation problems that are currently facing the region. Overall, 3 participants indicated that maintenance of existing systems should take priority, 8 chose investing in new systems, and the remaining participant was undecided.

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| Maintain the existing system of roads, and the existing bus, rail and ferry services in the region. | 3 |
| Build new roads and add more bus, rail and ferry services in the region. | 8 |

The participants' allocation of the \$30 billion dollar budget toward maintenance reflects their discussion of the importance of maintenance. Just 1 participant indicated that she would spend only up to 25 percent, most participants indicated that they would spend up to 50 percent, and the 3 participants who had prioritized maintenance in the previous question would spend up to 75 percent.

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| up to 25% (\$7.5 billion dollars) | 1 |
| up to 50% (\$15 billion dollars) | 8 |
| up to 75% (\$22.5 billion dollars) | 3 |
| 100% (\$30 billion dollars) | 0 |

With the funds that remain from the \$30 billion dollar budget, the participants reported that they would invest in the following: extending light rail from San Francisco to Marin County (8), expanding other public transportation systems (3), providing incentives to employers and communities to encourage residents' use of public transit and telecommuting (1), adding bike lanes and other alternative transportation projects (5), and updating roads to make them more efficient (1). The participants discussed that transportation alternatives are needed in their community, with particular emphasis on light rail projects.

Congestion relief: Similar to a majority of the other focus groups, the participants felt that traffic congestion would be worse in the future if the \$30 billion dollar budget was spent only on maintenance projects. Several participants cited the increase in traffic congestion that has already

occurred in the region, and there was a general consensus that the roads and highways in Marin County are reaching capacity.

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| Much better | 0 |
| Somewhat better | 0 |
| No change | 0 |
| Somewhat worse | 3 |
| Much worse | 9 |

In contrast to several of the other focus groups, the Marin County participants prioritized public transportation and alternative transportation projects to relieve traffic congestion. Here again, projects focusing on highway systems were considered to maintain status quo and current transportation problems. Specific public transportation projects were discussed, including the need for buses and shuttles for local travel and light rail and additional ferries for travel to San Francisco. Several participants mentioned that existing public transportation systems are more focused on the needs of commuters, rather than providing comprehensive options for residents. Although only two participants prioritized investments in walking paths and bicycle lanes, the other participants reinforced the need for these options.

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| Highway systems to relieve traffic congestion, including ramp metering, high-occupancy toll lanes, etc. | 0 |
| Public transit options, including rail and buses to provide alternatives to driving. | 10 |
| Walking paths and bicycle lanes to provide alternatives to driving | 2 |

Shown in the table below are the programs that the participants thought would be most effective in reducing truck volumes along freight corridors. Some of the participants indicated more than one option, so the responses total to more than 12.

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| Keep trucks out of the peak commuter hours | 7 |
| Allow smaller trucks to use carpool lanes during congested periods for a fee | 2 |
| Encourage more cargo deliveries be made by rail or ferries | 3 |
| Build exclusive truck lanes supported by trucking fees | 1 |
| Provide more truck parking in commercial business areas | 1 |

Attitudes toward focused growth: The participants were evenly split in their attitudes toward focused growth – 5 participants felt that communities that build housing along public transit lines should receive additional transportation funds, whereas 6 participants felt that transportation funds should be distributed evenly based on population or another system. The participants in

favor of even distribution argued that developers should be responsible for funding transportation projects to new housing, and a penalty system should be in place rather than the suggested system of incentives. Additionally, it was discussed that all communities are in need of transportation projects, and the even distribution of funds may better address problems throughout the Bay area.

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| Funds to communities that are planning to build more housing along BART and other public transit lines | 5 |
| Funds evenly to communities regardless of where they are planning to build homes | 6 |

Providing transit access: All but two of the participants described public transportation in Marin County as affordable. Further, all of the participants favored the continuation of transit discount programs, and 11 out of 12 participants preferred the current system of discounts to students, seniors, and riders with physical disabilities over a system based on household income. One participant strongly argued in favor of a system based on household income, but a majority of the group felt that it would be too intrusive or complicated to administer. Several participants stated that the current system has the benefit of being consistent with other discount programs, such as at museums, theaters, and amusement parks. Although there was a general consensus in the group, the discussion indicates that residents' opinions of discount programs may differ by socioeconomic status.

Emissions reduction: Similar to the responses on priorities for reducing traffic congestion, 10 out of 12 participants indicated that reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving should be a priority in plans to reduce emissions. Conversely, two participants would prioritize reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow. These two participants emphasized the need for better highway planning, and the advantage that this alternative is in keeping with current transportation habits in their community. Additionally, the need for better enforcement of HOV lanes was discussed, as well as the advantages of adding long-distance lanes or fast lanes. In contrast to their viewpoint, a majority of the participants felt that projects to improve traffic flow would take longer to implement and act as only a temporary solution. Similar to several of the other focus groups, the participants discussed the need for alternatives to driving in their community. This group also emphasized the need for alternative fuels and programs to reduce tailpipe emissions.

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| Reducing tailpipe emissions and encouraging alternatives to driving, such as public transit, bicycling, walking, etc. | 10 |
| Reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow to make it easier to drive around the Bay area | 2 |

The participants suggested a variety of transportation programs to reduce automobile emissions. Several participants discussed that they would not feel safe driving a smaller, more fuel-efficient automobile while there are so many SUV's on the road. In response to these comments, the participants suggested programs to discourage the purchase of larger vehicles. There was also some concern that current public transportation does not meet the needs of families, including offering more in-town coverage and room for sporting equipment and baggage on buses and shuttles. One participant suggested that commuters' use of public transit should be subsidized. Finally, several participants argued that transportation funds should be allocated to communities based on emissions reduction projects and performance.

Final thoughts on maintenance versus expansion projects: Overall, the participants reported that they would spend the same amount on maintenance as at the beginning of the discussion. However, one participant made a more specific comment on maintenance spending, “As much as necessary to prevent further overall degradation. Deferring maintenance is a fatal disease.”

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| up to 25 % (\$7.5 billion dollars) | 1 |
| up to 50 % (\$15 billion dollars) | 8 |
| up to 75 % (\$22.5 billion dollars) | 2 |
| 100 % (\$30 billion dollars) | 0 |
| DK/NA | 1 |

In addition to maintenance, the participants indicated the following projects as priorities for funding: projects to relieve traffic congestion (4) and reduce emissions (3), additional parking at public transit stations (2), programs to encourage development of new housing near transit (1), extending light rail to Marin County (4), and expanding other public transit systems (3).

The participants indicated that they would be open to a revenue measure to fund additional public transportation. Similar to the focus groups conducted in the other eight counties, these participants reported that they would need additional details before rendering an opinion.